

C. Remarks

The claims are 1-3, 11-13 and 18-23, with claims 1, 11, 12 and 13 being independent. Claims 14-17 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. The features of each one of these claims have been included in the respective independent claims. Also, claim 13 has been amended for clarification. New claims 18-23, which are based on claims 2 and 3, have been added. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the present claims is expressly requested.

Claim 13 is objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75 for being a substantial duplicate of claim 12. It is believed that the above amendment to claim 13 fully addresses the Examiner's concern. Therefore, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for his indication that claims 14-17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In keeping with this indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants have amended each independent claim to include the features of claims 14-17. Consequently all claims are seen to be in condition for allowance.

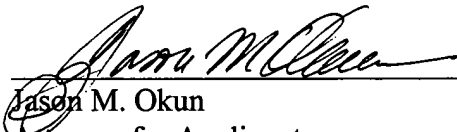
The Office Action entered rejections of claims 1 and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0026959 A1 (Furuse '959). Claims 2-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Furuse '959 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,586,155 B2 (Furuse '155). Since the independent claims have been amended to include the features of allowable claims 14-17, all claims are seen to be in condition for allowance. The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance and to expedite issuance. In fact, Applicants strongly disagree with the Examiner's

interpretation of Furuse '959 and reiterate that the Examiner's understanding of its disclosure is incorrect.

Wherefore, Applicants respectfully request that the outstanding rejections be withdrawn and that the present case be passed to issue.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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